Food Stamps Station

Food-stamp tally nears 40 million, sets record

WASHINGTON | Fri May 7, 2010 1:28pm EDT

(Reuters) - Nearly 40 million Americans received food stamps -- the latest in an ever-higher string of record enrollment that dates from December 2008 and the U.S. recession, according to a government update.

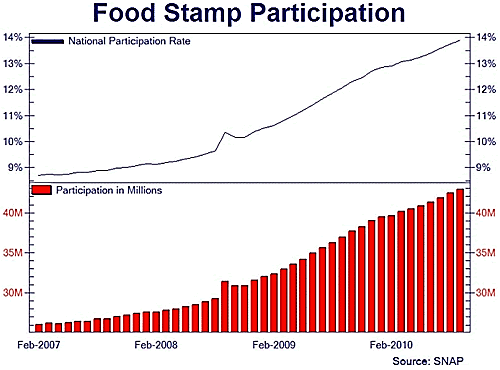
Food stamps are the primary federal anti-hunger program, helping poor people buy food. Enrollment is highest during times of economic distress. The jobless rate was 9.9 percent, the government said on Friday.

The Agriculture Department said 39.68 million people, or 1 in 8 Americans, were enrolled for food stamps during February, an increase of 260,000 from January. USDA updated its figures on Wednesday.

"This is the highest share of the U.S. population on SNAP/food stamps," said the anti-hunger group Food Research and Action Center, using the new name for food stamps, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). "Research suggests that one in three eligible people are not receiving ... benefits."

Enrollment has set a record each month since reaching 31.78 million in December 2008. USDA estimates enrollment will average 40.5 million people this fiscal year, which ends Sept 30, at a cost of up to $59 billion. For fiscal 2011, average enrollment is forecast for 43.3 million people.

(From <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/05/07/us-food-usa-stamps-idUSTRE6465E220100507>)



(Below are instructions on how to use SNAP and the penalties for misuse taken from the gov’t website below)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

***SNAP Fraud and Abuse***

Persons found guilty of intentional program violations may be disqualified from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program 12 months for the first offense, 24 months for the second and permanently for the third offense. In addition, the court will require repayment of any unauthorized SNAP benefits issued. Households **CANNOT** use SNAP benefits to buy:

* Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco;
* Any nonfood items such as pet foods, soaps, paper products and household supplies
* Vitamins and medicines.
* Food that will be eaten in the store.
* Hot foods

In some areas, restaurants can be authorized to accept SNAP benefits from qualified homeless, elderly, or disabled people in exchange for low-cost meals. SNAP benefits cannot be exchanged for cash.

*(From:* [*http://dss.sd.gov/foodstamps/fraud/*](http://dss.sd.gov/foodstamps/fraud/)*)*

13 people indicted in food stamp fraud case

BY RON SYLVESTER

The Wichita Eagle

Posted on Wed, Mar. 02, 2011

Last November, an undercover police officer paid $303.60 for a pack of gum and some cookies at the Alnoor Grocery store. Store owner Shama Qadeer pulled cash out of her blouse and handed $180 to the customer, according to a federal indictment filed Tuesday in Wichita.

That was one of about 2,600 transactions at two Wichita grocery stores designed to steal federal food stamp benefits, U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said Tuesday. More than $580,000 in benefits was stolen, he said.… "The great irony is that... right across from the federal courthouse is where a lot of these folks, who were homeless, were approached," Grissom said.

(Read more: <http://www.kansas.com/2011/03/02/1742658/13-people-indicted-in-food-stamp.html#ixzz1I1RSHFvv>)

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| **1. How many people benefit from food stamps?**  **2. How can participation in food stamp programs be used to measure the economy? The unemployment rate? Explain**  **3. Why does would the government put limits on what people can by with SNAP (food stamps)?**  **4. How are food stamp programs open to abuse?** |